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05-231

COMMENT RE CLOSED CAPTIONING QUALITY VIA EMAIL TO FCC DOCKET 05-231

-----Original Message-----

From: Donald Campbell [mailto:donaciano@earthlink.net]

Sent: Thursday, December 22, 2005 5:16 PM

To: KJMWEB

Cc: Michael Copps; Jonathan Adelstein

Subject: Captioning in internet TV downloads

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FCC-MAILROOM

Gentlemen,

First of all forgive me if I'm proceeding with this in the wrong way, your emails were the first listed in FCC contacts on the official website. My name is Donald Campbell, I'm a deaf adult living in the state of Washington. For years I have benefitted from the near universal standard of Closed Captioning in new TV and movie releases. I'm always pleased to see more stations and more shows adding this beneficial service so that deaf Americans can enjoy equal access to video news and entertainment.

However recently I have noticed the new trend towards internet movie and TV downloads and that they are not including deaf people in their audience. It especially saddens me to see this when I realize that the source content was most likely already captioned before it was converted into digital format. I've seen the way digital music downloads have continued to grow year over year and are now becoming a significant percentage of all music sales. It saddens me to think that should this trend continue, in the near future deaf people will be essentially blocked out of access to what may be the next major platform for TV and movie distribution. Specifically I have emailed my concerns to Apple about their iTunes Music Store TV show sales. After buying an episode to test out their service I was disappointed to see that the television captions had been removed from the digital version of the show.

As a new medium I feel that the Telecommunications Act of 1996 does not adequately address these and other issues related to internet media downloads. For one thing I'm sure internet resellers do not consider themselves under your domain, that may be legally so I am not a lawyer. :-)

I believe that future regulations involving digital media should have special requirements regarding "new" and "old" programming.

For example, digital downloads can be tracked by the sellers on a per-user basis. In addition digital files can easily be updated at any time. These two facts together mean that any "old" programming could be updated within a given timeframe, and those who have already purchased them before this time could be given a free re-download of the updated material. In this way all currently offered internet downloads could be updated as well as all future releases should be required to already contain captions. For Apple it is particularly inexcusable considering that their Quicktime media format already has built-in support for "text tracks" that are over-laid on top of the video very similarly to closed-captions on a TV. These text tracks can be turned on or off during playback, or an option could be added to always have them turned on if a person such as me would always require them. It would be very easy for Apple to update their videos and add support for this using text tracks or other methods. I have already contacted them about this several months ago and have received no acknowledgment of my concerns, which is why I am bringing the issue up with the FCC. Hopefully some sort of agreement can be worked out or I will be forced to investigate using the ADA to try and effect change.

Sincerely,
Donald R. Campbell II

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